1997 cover the extra cost burden involved in setting up industries in the region; and

(b) if not, what is the immediate proposal of Government to neutralise the extra cost as also to attract private investment in N.E. States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) and (b) The concessions contained in the new Industrial policy for the North Eastern Region announced on 24.12.1997 are intended to reduce the infrastructural disadvantages of setting up industries there. There is no immediate proposal to modify the policy.

Production of Spices

1864. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total production of various spices in the country during this financial year;

(b) what is the total consumption of spices in the country;

(c) what is the total export of spices from the country; and

(d) what steps are being taken to improve the export from the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The lastest estimates of production of various spices in the country are available for the year 1998-99 which show a production of 28,93,030 tonnes.

(b) the consumption of spices in the country is not assessed.

(c) Export of Spices from India during the period April, 1999 to January, 2000 was 157,435 tonnes valued at Rs. 145783.80 lakhs as reported by the Spices Board.

(d) Beside the general trade policy reforms, some of the steps taken to enhance exports of spices include rationalisation of cess on export of spices @ 0.5% to make them price competitive in the overseas market, implementation of brand promotion schemes like "Logo Promotion", grant of "Spices House Certificate" as a recognition of processor/exporter of quality products, setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality, technology transfer, process upgradation and product development.